

Proposal Title	Drugs & Conflict Prevention in Afghanistan
Applicant	Global Drug Policy Program, Open Society Afghanistan
Reserve Fund	MENA Reserve
Amount Requested	\$193,400
Unforeseen Need (250 words)	<p>Several factors contribute to the timeliness and unforeseen nature of this request.</p> <p>First, there's new space for technical inputs to the policy sphere. In October, the government approved a new five year National Drug Action Plan (2015-2019). The plan explicitly states a need for assistance from civil society, and provides an immediate framework around which we can offer technical assistance and support local actors on implementation. The goals of the plan are: 1) decreasing opium-poppy cultivation; 2) decreasing the production and trafficking of opiates and 3) reducing domestic demand for illicit drugs; and increasing the provision of treatment for users. However, we see space for policy and advocacy input, particularly around goal 1 through engagement with the development and security sectors.</p> <p>In addition, in a meeting between President Ghani and George Soros last year, President Ghani requested OSF assistance regarding drug policy. Subsequent interactions with President Ghani's team prioritized other areas for initial OSA / OSF attention, but the GDPP and OSA now feel the policy climate is ripe for intervention. Encouragingly, President Ashraf Ghani recently expressed a desire to move away from the old drug-war approach, stating; "You cannot carry a war on drugs because, again, if you look at the literature on Latin America, Central America, and particularly Mexico, there are lessons and the lesson that is fundamental, [is that] those are failures." A policy rethink is long overdue, but will require significant boosts in capacity across the spectrum. The National Action Plan lays out the broad outlines, with emphasis on a cross-sectoral approach, but there is much work to be done articulating a constructive strategy.</p> <p>The second factor for this unforeseen need is a concern about growing Russian influence in regional drug policy; the Russians are known as the staunchest supporters of the global war on drugs. A recent report indicates that the heads of drug control for Afghanistan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Iran met in Tehran on October 26 to develop a common agenda for the upcoming UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on drugs in 2016. Among these states, Russia is likely to be the dominant force. This could result in reduced support for harm reduction, non-punitive measures, and increased coercive suppression of supply.</p> <p>Finally, these policy debates are given a sense of urgency by the deteriorating security conditions. With the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan, stabilization efforts are likely to be undermined by the ever expanding drugs trade and resulting competition among a plethora of local actors wishing to either control the trade or use counter-narcotics policies to undermine their opponents.</p>

Activities Proposed (500 words)	<p>To help address the lack of policy focus on drugs issues, two activities are being proposed. First is a high-level seminar for senior Afghan officials and a suite of policy-relevant publication around the subject of “Drugs and Conflict Prevention in Afghanistan.” The workshop and publications would be convened by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), a leading think tank on conflict, security, and international relations. IISS’s Security and Development Program published the well-reviewed volume, “Drugs, Insecurity, and Failed States: The Problems of Prohibition”, and would be the implementing partner. IISS, with OSF support, plans to engage relevant officials within President Ghani’s administration to promote a more effective and comprehensive approach to drug issues. The event would be set for spring, 2016, shortly after the UNGASS with the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Reflecting on UNGASS’ deliberations and their relevance for Afghanistan . Encouraging the integration of drug policy into mainstream policy discussion . Promoting cross-departmental and multidisciplinary approaches, e.g. breaking barriers between security and development practitioners, and increasing coordination. <p>In advance of the workshop, IISS would issue a policy brief to help establish an informed debate. Following the workshop, IISS would issue a rapporteurs’ summary of policy takeaways. The workshop would be a one and a half day event held in IISS’s Middle East office located in Bahrain. The location would help mitigate security concerns and costs for regional delegates from Russia, Tajikistan, and Pakistan and international delegates from London, Washington D.C. and New York. It’s a relatively neutral and respected location within the MENA/SWA region. IISS Middle East office recently held a high-level security conference attended by several senior Afghan officials and is enthusiastic about engaging more directly on drug policy.</p> <p>The second activity is to hire a consultant, preferably Afghaistan based and with significant experience in drug policy making. The consultant would be supervised by GDPP, given their technical expertise and capacity, but the consultant would serve as an advisor to Open Society Afghanistan, the Global Drug Policy Program and the Regional Advocacy Manager for MENA/SWA, helping to develop meaningful engagement with local actors and where possible, providing technical assistance to government interlocutors. The consultant would fill a critical gap in the capacity of the various OSF programs by providing expert and dedicated attention to the drug policy making process in Afghanistan, mapping existing actors, and identifying important opportunities.</p>
Summary for Board Reports	<p>In response to an opening in policy discussions, and a request from President Ghani, the Global Drug Policy Program and Open Society Afghanistan are proposing two things: support for a high-level</p>

(100 words)	workshop with senior Afghan policy makers on the topic of “Drugs and Conflict Prevention in Afghanistan”, convened by the International Institute for Strategic Studies. A policy brief will be published in advance of the workshop, and an outcome report will be published with key policy takeaways for further advocacy. A consultant will also be hired to help map and steer strategic and technical engagement in Afghan drug policy making.
Collaborating Programs within OSF and essential partners or grantees	OSF: Open Society Afghanistan, Global Drug Policy Program, and the Middle East, North Africa and Southwest Asia Program. External: The International Institute for Strategic Studies.
Contributions expected from Collaborating Programs (250 words)	The Open Society Afghanistan and MENA Regional Advocacy Manager will offer its expertise on the local context, provide support in reaching high-level officials, and provide agenda and policy input. These entities will also help steer the work and priorities of the consultant. IISS will be the implementing partner for the workshop and policy papers.
Statement of who within OSF would guide the work	The Global Drug Policy Program will be the lead department guiding the work.

Allocator <i>(See list on Reserve Funds KARL)</i>	Name	Anthony Richter
	Date Approved	
Allocator Notes / Comments <i>(To be completed by allocator only)</i>	<i>(Notes/Comments - Optional field)</i>	
	<i>(Criteria checklist)</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is this an <u>unforeseen</u> opportunity or a genuinely new idea to advance core open society commitments? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is the need time-sensitive? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Are we proposing to do something that others are not doing? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is the plan compelling? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Does the planned activity take good advantage of OSF capacity? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is the team leading the work up to the task?	
Urgency level for grant approval & payments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Rapid Response	<input type="checkbox"/> Rapid Response <i>(See procedure on KARL)</i>
If approved, where to allocate the budget? <i>(If the budget is split between multiple programs, please copy/paste this section as</i>	Amount	\$193,400
	Category of Work	FGG004
	Division/Program Code	GDP Program
	Entity <i>(i.e., FPOS, ZUG)</i>	FPOS
	Fund Class <i>(i.e., Lobbying/Non-Lobbying)</i>	Non-lobbying
	Geography <i>(of benefit)</i>	MENA/SWA

needed.)		
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